



General Membership Meeting 9/22/2019

In Attendance: Jason Johnson, Jose Taveras, Matthew Keep, David Buchholz, Jason Dornford, Heather Duby, Special Guests and various members of the general membership.

A moment of silence was observed for members that were recently lost.

Marshall Raul 07/20/1952 (Retired) Davis Vision, Newtown Square 1999-2012 Finishing and ARC Tech. Shop Steward 1999-2010

Pearl Kiskis 06/24/1949 Vision works, Amsterdam Store # 1052. 30 years, Licensed Optician.

10:23 – **Roberts Rules:** A brief description of the microphone use was explained along with the Roberts Rules of order.

10:25 – **Meeting called to order/Pledge of Allegiance**

10:29 – **Agenda:** The agenda was shared and reviewed. There were slight changes to order of business made by the president. Which did all then adopt.

10:30 – **Introductions:** President Johnson introduced the members of the Executive Board, stewards, and guests in attendance.

10:35 – **Ice Breaker Exercise:** President Johnson lead an ice breaker exercise that involved participation on the floor that required members to get to know each other from other bargaining units and taught the basics of negotiating.

10:53 – **Campaign Efforts:** CWA District 1 staff Rep, Hae Lin Choo spoke about the different political campaign efforts going on currently with the CWA. This included, the offshoring campaign and the recent Call Center Bill campaign.

It was noted that NYS has lost over 40,000 call center jobs and the call center bill was passed for NY in June and it is now just waiting to be signed by the governor.

11:06 – **State of the Union:** President Johnson presented the State of the Union.

Past Year

- As of November the local has 26 stewards. When the current leadership first started the local only had 13 stewards. Of those 26 stewards, 17 attended training in November with 5 more receiving training over the next few days.
- Systems are in place to track grievances, and more grievances have been won including reinstatement of jobs than ever before over the last 20 years.
- January- The Value Visions contract was ratified at 100%. Highlights include increases to medical premium employer contributions, and wage increases. Also automatic recognition for future shops. (As of 10/1 the bargaining unit would about double as a result of this clause.)
- This past year, 2 NYC Visionworks locations and the Syracuse Lab were closed.
- Previous Visionworks Lead Shop Steward Orvin Caraballo was offered a fulltime job with the IUE as an Organizer. This is the first time a member from our local was awarded a position with the IUE.
- March The local negotiated mid term wage increases for all of the Latham bargaining unit. Members saw minimally there COLA early and some saw as much as 20% increases.
- The new Telehealth position at Visionworks will be a Union position with the potential of serious growth and career advancement for OA's in that roll in the future.
- In April + May, Visionworks held "Roadshows". There were 5 in total for the bargaining unit. President Johnson was able to attend 3 of the 5.
- Newtown Square – In June the company announced that it was contracting out the "commercial" work and that it would impact about 45 members in the lab. The Union was able to negotiate with the company and not one single member lost a job or lost pay as a result of this change.
- In June the Syracuse Lab closed its doors. However the Union did secure some of the very best severance packages that the local has ever seen for those workers.
- Visionworks was purchased by VSP in July, which is run by doctors. We expect major changes (positive and negative) to come as a result of this in the future.
- We are in the process of organizing US Optical + Optogenics labs in Syracuse where many of our members from the Syracuse Lab went after the closure, there are also plans to continue to organize the non union Visionworks locations and the "VSP One" Labs throughout the US.
- In July at the IUE-CWA convention President Carl Kennebrew was re-elected as IUE President and the SIF and Growth Funds were merged which should help our local with organizing which the international has committed to our local.

- Visionworks Shop Steward and member Kim Idzinski's son, William Idzinski was awarded a 2-year scholarship by the CWA. This is the largest scholarship the CWA Offers.
- The mailroom at the Latham facility is losing 6 members, due to downsizing.
- In August, IUE President Carl Kennebrew and staff attended a LMM for Visionworks. Topics included the purchase of Visionworks by VSP and organizing. It was the first time that the president of the IUE attended a meeting for Visionworks.
- Arbitration for Visionworks over the use of apprentices is scheduled for Oct. 24th

Upcoming Year Plans

- Balester contract negotiations will begin in November. Surveys and a meeting were already held for this bargaining unit.
- Newtown Square Lab contract negotiation will begin in February 2020. There are plans for surveys to go out in November and a meeting In February.
- President Johnson has plans to revisit all the Visionworks and Value Visions retail store locations again next year and quarterly visits to the large locations.
- CWA Presidents meeting will be held in 2020. (President to attend)
- CWA District 1 meeting will be held in 2020. (President to attend)
- IUE Divisional meeting will be held in July 2020. All members of the Executive Board will attend.
- A GMM for the local will be held in summer/fall of 2020.
- Continued Steward Training for all stewards will take place in 2020.
- Latham Contract Negotiations will begin around August 2020. Surveys and meetings will take place months prior to negotiations.
- Elections - Fall/Winter 2020.

11:32 – The Presidents report and “upcoming plans” were adopted by all.

11:33 – **Ex Board Meeting Minutes:** Recording Secretary Matthew Keep presented the minutes from the last 3 quarters of the fiscal year (Which were included in everyone's packet). It was explained why the minutes are always one quarter behind and a update was made about the minutes from 04/26/19 going from “draft” to “official” as a result of the Executive board meeting held the day before. Members can also find the Minutes posted on the Unions website www.opticalworkers.org

11:36 – The Minutes were adopted

11:37 – **Treasury Report:** President Johnson presented the Treasury Report, which included the last 3 quarters of the fiscal year in the packet.

11:39 – The Treasury Report was adopted

11:40 – **Audit Reports:** Trustee Heather Duby Presented the Audit Reports which included the last 3 quarters of the fiscal year in the packet.

11:41 The Audit Reports were adopted

11:42 – **LM2 Reports:** Trustee David Buchholz presented the LM2 Reports from the latest Fiscal year which were also included in the packets. It was pointed out that as promised, the president took about a ten thousand dollar pay cut over the previous presidents salary from the previous fiscal year.

A question from member, Cathy Croce was asked, why previous president Mary Dado collected a salary. It was explained by Trustee Dave Buchholz that because our fiscal year runs from October-September, the previous fiscal year, still consisted of one quarter were the previous president was still in office.

11:46 – The LM2 Reports were adopted

11:46 – **Investments Report:** Trustee Jason Dornford spoke about the changes to our investment fund going from Franklin Templeton to Charles Shwabb and handled by Rockbridge Investments.

It was by recommendation of the locals Accountants to have an Investment Policy and an Investment Advisor to help manage the local's investment funds. In April after much research the Executive Board decided to go with Rockbridge Investments out of the Syracuse in area to handle the funds going forward, which resulted in a switch from Franklin Templeton to Charles Schwabb. An investment policy was also adopted.

11:48 – The Investments Report and changes to the investment fund, were adopted by all.

11:51 – **NILICO:** David Scalisi from National Income Life Insurance Company presented.

- No cost \$2,000 Accidental Death & Dismemberment Policy already in place for all union members will increase to \$2,500 in October.
- Opportunity to increase basic coverage at a low cost will be made available to all members.
- If there is a layoff, there is a waiver of premiums up to 3 months. If there is a strike there is a waiver up to a year.
- In house food bank for any members who are having a hardship.

12:06 – **Valley Recovery Center:** Arthur Mogilevski, CEO and Cofounder presented.

For those that may be in need, Valley Recovery Center offers;

- Mental health + substance abuse.
- Members are covered by their insurance and VRC will do all the paperwork.
- Agreement with Union to help with travel and payments for those with high deductibles.

Information can be found on the locals website and by contacting your steward.

Vice President Jose Taveras also spoke about his visit to VRC, and about his own personal fight with addiction. He compared his past experience to VRC. He had 5 points he was looking for and VRC passed all 5 points and he feels that if there is anyone that is in need, this was an excellent opportunity to get help.

12:19 – **Rockbridge Investments:** Nick Stancato, financial advisor of Rockbridge presented.

Partnering with the local and now managing the local's investment fund, Rockbridge Investment may also be able to help our individual members. They work with 401K's, social security, savings plans, etc.

They also work with insurance companies, paying off debt (debt payoff strategies), student loan debt, etc. They are an independent RIA and work on no commission. For more information please contact your steward. (Information will also be made available on the website very soon.)

12:30 – [Questions & Corrections] – Sandy Lyn Rivet made a correction about a misspoken name. She also asked a question about why we support AT&T when they don't support us?

President Johnson explained that AT&T Mobility is part of the CWA and we support our union Brothers and Sisters in any way that we can.

A second question was also asked about the "Union Sportsman's Alliance" pamphlet that was in each packet and why the members weren't asked if they wanted to be part of that, and if there was any way to opt out.

It was explained by president Johnson, that this was something that is offered at the international level and was voted on by all the delegates of the IUE in 2017 at the IUE/CWA Convention and Divisional Meeting.

12:34 – **Woman's Committee/CLUW:** President Johnson spoke on the Woman's Committee and asked anyone that was interested in being part of the committee to see Recording Secretary Matthew Keep after the meeting.

In addition, the local agreed to pay for the yearly membership for any woman on the local committee to be part of the local CLUW chapter.

12:36 – **Organizing Efforts:** Orvin Caraballo, IUE Organizer Presented.

We are currently working on organizing and we are working together with President Johnson and President Kennebrew on the Visionworks VSP merger. We are also working on training stewards to organize.

[Question] David Solomonoff - As a former Maximus employee I was wondering what was going on with that?

[Answer] We are having more political battles with them, that is something that is on the CWA agenda, but not this local's agenda.

[Question] Ron Taylor – If someone is interested in joining the Union what should they do?

[Answer] The steward needs to contact President Johnson with the contact information, which will then be forwarded to the IUE.

[Question] Ron Taylor – If there are people who are in a different union and want to join this union how can they do that?

[Answer] That is a little more complicated, and the best answer is they should reach out to their local stewards.

[Question] Joe Rizzo. I was wondering whether the Winchester lab is being considered for organizing.

[Answer] Essilor labs are on our agenda, with Optigenics being one of them. But our efforts right now are to try and grow the Balester lab in Wilkes Barre by getting an agreement to have them be the lab of choice for Value Visions and having the Davis Vision union Commercial work also being done by Balester.

12:48 – **General Housekeeping:**

Robyn August - I have so much gratitude about what an amazing job Jason has done as president, this will be my last meeting as I am retiring, but wanted to thank Jason for all he has done and he is the best thing this local has seen.

Anna Gasseter – Thank you Jason for all you have done, we need to stay unified in our upcoming contracts.

12:52 – **COPE:** Vice President Jose Taveras spoke on COPE.

- Cope is the political action fund.
- Missouri defeated right to work. Your contributions were instrumental in that victory!
- TPP trade deal – defeated
- N.Y. Call Center Bill Passed
- www.AFLCIO.org/scorecard
- Our local went from about \$24 a month contributions to PAF to over \$600 a month since 2018.

When we come together we win!

12:59 – **(Door Prizes) Good & Welfare:**

\$100 Gift Card – Angelina Cedeno

Nintendo Switch – Allison Martin

CWA Sweatshirt – James Capone

United Optical Workers Hoodie – Lee Willis

CWA Mug – Sarah Neach

1:09 – **Meeting Adjourned**